

Doctor of Laws, honoris causa

September 30, 2002

CBackhouse

Treasurer, may I present to you and this Convocation Professor Constance Backhouse, LL.B., LL.M. (Harvard), LSM and request that you confer upon her the degree of Doctor of Laws, honoris causa.

Constance Backhouse earned her Bachelor of Arts from the University of Manitoba in 1972 and completed her LL.B. at Osgoode Hall Law School in 1975. She was called to the Ontario Bar in 1978.

It was not until she embarked upon her legal career that she realized the extent to which sexism, discrimination and harassment permeated Canadian life. The revelation had an immense impact on her career, propelling her away from active practice and into the academic world where she knew she could write at length about human rights and women's issues and reach a wider audience.

In 1979, she completed her LL.M. at Harvard Law School and, in the same year, accepted an assistant professorship in the Faculty of Law at the University of Western Ontario. Today, she serves as a professor of law in the Common Law Section at the University of Ottawa and the Director of the university's Human Rights Centre. She has written numerous influential articles and books, including Colour-Coded: A Legal History of Racism in Canada 1900-1950, which won the Joseph Brant Award in 2002. In 1998, the Law Society recognized her significant contributions to the legal profession by awarding her the Law Society Medal. Today, we honour her again.

She is deserving of the highest honour this Society can give and I request you, Sir, to confer upon Professor Constance Backhouse the degree of Doctor of Laws, honoris causa.